

GRAHAM'S FAREWELL

Billy Graham's evangelism has had a strong appeal for Britons. Here is the report of the London Observer of the last meeting of his crusade.

Mr. Billy Graham, the American evangelist, a slim, urgent figure in a dark blue raincoat, filled Wembley Stadium last night with possibly the biggest crowd it has ever had. It was the last of his Greater London Crusade meetings, and some 120,000 people were present.

From the damp, restless flags, high against the grey sky, the sides of the stadium came down, steep beaches of heads, speckled with umbrellas.

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Earlier, Mr. Graham, whose British audiences have now totaled over 1,700,000, addressed a crowd 67,000 strong at the White City. He was a sharp profile against the sky; an emphatic first finger stabbed the air.

There, at the urging of the agile song leader ("I'm sure you know the tune — well, string along with your neighbor, anyway"), magnificent hymns went up into the sky that was then dark and pink: "This is my story, This is my song," "What a friend we have in Jesus."

At Wembley he arrived with the Archbishop of Canterbury. They moved to the red-and-blue covered rostrum.

High up on the totalisator a banner read in great letters: "Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Against the hymn-singing the cameras purred. A smiling bus driver was singing lustily.

Laughter came easily. There were women in colored mackintoshes and scarves; young men and old, children and babies.

Beneath the canvas canopy were leaders of many religious denominations, including the Rev. E. Benson Perkins, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, who led the prayers; the Bishop of Barking (a member of the London Crusade executive committee); Dr. Ernest Payne, general secretary, Baptist Union; the Rev. F. P. Copeland Simmonds, Moderator-elect, Free Church Federal Council; the Rev. Colin Roberts, ex-Moderator of the Methodist Conference; the Rev. Francis House, Director of Religious Broadcasting; and Col. Bernard Booth of the Salvation Army, grandson of the founder, Gen. Booth.

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Mr. Graham was plainly moved as he gazed around at his vast congregation. "We, as a team, have fallen in love with the British people," he said, "and I trust that one of the by-products of this campaign has been the betterment of Anglo-American relations."

"Our destinies as two nations are linked together," he continued. "I sincerely believe this is a demonstration on the moral and spiritual level that our two nations are one."

"We have learned a good deal from you concerning discipline, and your sense of fair play—all the things you have taught us we are going to carry back to the United States."

In response to Mr. Graham's final appeal for people to come forward and make their "decisions for Christ" many thousands moved slowly down the aisles and across the football field until the whole of the area of grass roped off for the purpose in front of the platform was filled.

While 2000 counselors took their names and addresses, the 4000-voice crusade choir hummed, "Just as I am." As the last notes died away, Mr. Graham said quietly: "We have never seen a moment like this before: this is God's moment."

A few moments of immense silence followed. Then Mr. Graham invited the Archbishop of Canterbury to give the final benediction.

When it was all over, Mr. Graham admitted, looking back on his two closing meetings: "It was some day."